

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 19 through page 4, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph as follows:

-- Furthermore, in a Patent Literature 2, there has been disclosed a hardware router in which a labeling packet and the IP packet are judged by an input line interface, and the IP header is transmitted to a forwarding engine for being processed according to the judgment result. However, no consideration has been given to scalability or extensibility of the processing.

[Non-Patent Literature 1]

Itaru Mimura and two others, "Terabit Node for Next-generation IP Networks", [online], December 2000, HITACHI REVIEW, [retrieved on January 30, 2003], Internet, <URL: http://global.hitachi.com/Sp/TJ-e/2000/revdec00/pdf/r4_103.pdf> --

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph as follows:

-- Using the search result from the function search table 233, a port number (one or plural) of FP3 corresponding to the functional processing to be required and a port number of IFE2 at the output destination are added to the packet at the destination header generator 234 (Fig. 2). ~~When~~ When the functional processing is not required, only the port number of IFE2 at the output destination is added to the packet. In this case, it is assumed that the port number is a value for identifying a connection port of SWE1 and has been allocated uniquely within the packet communication device in

advance. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 16, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph as follows:

-- First a packet with stacked port numbers (forwarding information) will ~~reach~~reach FP-A 3A through SWE1 in accordance with forwarding information corresponding to a port number P5, and be subjected to desired functional processing. --